

Rapid Response



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



Rapid Response

This booklet outlines some of the services available to workers affected by layoffs or closures. The agencies represented here offer worker readjustment services designed to transition employees back into the workforce as quickly as possible.

A Rapid Response meeting is often the first step in informing workers of the many resources that are available in their community. The meetings provide workers with re-employment information about benefits and training programs. Agencies participating in Rapid Response meetings are dedicated to helping minimize the effects of a layoff for workers.

Early intervention has a significant, positive impact on the success of a readjustment effort.

Employees who attend Rapid Response meetings have a quicker re-entry rate into the workforce, often with better and higher paying jobs than if they did not participate in these services.

An employer providing a Rapid Response demonstrates support for employees by:

- Easing tension and anxiety after layoff announcement
- Increasing employee morale
- Providing tools and techniques for job search
- Answering employees' questions and concerns
- Allowing time for appropriate choices and decisions

Rapid Response

What is Rapid Response?

- Meetings and workshops for employees who receive notice of layoff
- Introduction of local staff and re-employment services
- Information on local job market and training programs
- Early transition to re-employment

The Rapid Response team may include:

- Nebraska Workforce Development Offices
 - Career Services
 - Unemployment Insurance
- Workforce Investment programs
- Consumer Credit Counseling
- Community Colleges
- Health & Human Services
- United Way
- Veterans Administration

To provide Rapid Response services for your employees contact:

Nebraska Workforce Development-Department of Labor
Dislocated Worker Unit
Employment and Training
P.O. Box 94600
Lincoln, NE 68509
(402) 471-9878
TDD (800) 833-7352

Visit our Nebraska Workforce Development Web site at:

www.NebraskaWorkforce.com

Career Services

Workers can register for job match and referral at their local Nebraska Workforce Development Career Center (listing on page 16).

Job Referral

Workers' qualifications are matched with employers' job requirements through computerized file selection. Career Center staff contact applicants regarding employment opportunities using mailers or a central automated call-in system.

Counseling

Career specialists are available to assist with career decisions. Using a variety of tools, counselors assist applicants through the job seeking process.

Assessment

Skills, interests and aptitudes are assessed to help the job seeker consider a wide range of options when applying for a job.

Veterans

Veterans may receive individual assistance in their job search from designated staff specially trained to help this group of applicants.

Labor Market Information

The latest information on job trends and career options:

- Employment growth projections
- Economic Trends
- Wage estimates for jobs
- Economic statistics
- Occupational information
- Statewide unemployment rates
- Career Compass

For more information call: (402) 471-2600 or

email: LMI_NE@nebraska.gov

or find us on the web at NebraskaWorkforce.com.

Resources On The Web

Advancing Your Career

www.doleta.gov/jobseekers

America's Career Onestop

www.careeronestop.org

America's Service Locator

Search for employment and training service providers. The Service Locator contains information on service providers that are relevant to employment and training. Here you will find information on services ranging from One Stop Career Centers to child care providers and transportation services.

www.servicelocator.org

Nebraska JobLink

Nebraska JobLink provides you with direct access to job openings throughout the state 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

www.NebraskaWorkforce.com → click on "Find A Job"

Helpful Links on Nebraska JobLink home page

- Nebraska Career Centers, 17 offices across the state
- University of Nebraska - Lincoln
- State Government Job Openings
- City of Lincoln/Lancaster County Job Openings

Workforce Investment Programs

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) provides training and employment programs that are conveniently accessible and offers customers choice in the programs that best fit their needs.

Core

Job search and placement assistance, career counseling, Labor Market Information, skills required for in-demand jobs and initial assessment of skills and needs.

Intensive

Comprehensive assessment, development of individual employment plans, career planning, short-term pre-vocational services and work experience.

Training

Skill upgrading and retraining, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, customized training, adult education and literary-skills training.

WIA Service Providers:

One-Stop Employment Solutions

1010 'N' St.

Lincoln, NE 68508

(402) 441-7111

Greater Omaha Workforce Development

2421 N. 24th St.

Omaha, NE

68110-2282

(402) 444-4700

For providers in Greater Nebraska contact your nearest Nebraska Workforce Development Career Center listed on page 16.

Trade

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs are available to assist individuals who have become unemployed as a result of increased imports. The goal of the program is to help such laid-off workers return to suitable employment as quickly as possible.

Once a petition has been filed and the U.S. Department of Labor has issued an approved certification, workers are eligible to apply for a variety of benefits, including training, relocation, and out-of-area job search. Workers must meet individual training approval criteria to qualify for training. Workers who are not eligible for Trade Act programs may still qualify for dislocated worker programs.

The Trade Act of 2002 was designed to help workers become re-employed when jobs are lost due to foreign trade. If your company was certified for Trade Adjustment Assistance by the U.S. Department of Labor, you may apply for these benefits.

The primary intent of the Trade Act is to re-employ workers as quickly as possible through a variety of re-employment service options.

All benefits have different time constraints. Therefore, workers must file the appropriate application for the benefit in a timely manner. You can contact your One Stop Career Center if you have specific questions or for more information, visit the Trade Act Programs web site at:
www.doleta.gov/tradeact/.

If you wish to file a petition, you may print one from the following link, or visit your local Workforce Development Career Center and request a petition form: www.doleta.gov/tradeact/petitions.cfm.

Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment Insurance can pay a regular income to workers during periods of unemployment or reduced work hours. These weekly payments stabilize the workers' income and the economy of their community.

To be eligible for benefits, a worker must have worked recently at a job and have met specific claim requirements, which are explained when a claim is filed. Claims can be filed online or by calling the claims center.

To file an unemployment claim call: (402) 458-2500

Normal business hours are Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm CST

File online 24 hours a day, seven days a week at NebraskaWorkforce.com

You will need:

- Social Security Number
- Complete mailing address and county name
- Driver's license or Nebraska ID number
- Employment history for the last 18 months
- Be prepared to set a personal identification number (PIN) for yourself

You will be asked to make a selection of **Debit Card or Direct Deposit** to receive your benefits. If you select Direct Deposit, be prepared to enter your bank routing and account number. With either option you will be given a confirmation number when you have completed the claim filing process. Once your claim is filed, you will receive a packet of information by mail.

If using a cell phone to file your claim

The automated features of the system require detecting the tone created by pressing keys on the telephone keypad. The tone quality of some cellular and cordless phones may affect the caller's ability to complete the call.

Unemployment Insurance

What are the eligibility requirements?

Must be unemployed or underemployed.

Must file an application for benefits and complete weekly certifications.

Must have worked for an employer that is subject to paying UI taxes.

Must be physically able to work.

Must be available to accept a suitable job when offered, or return to your former job when recalled.

Must meet the work search requirements.

Must meet Nebraska Workforce Career Center registration requirements.

What could affect my benefits?

Voluntarily quitting a job without good cause.

Being discharged for misconduct in connection with a job.

Refusing an offer of suitable work.

Receiving compensation for: vacation pay, severance pay, pension, bonus, holiday pay and other similar payments.

Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA) benefits

Workers whose unemployment has been certified to be due to the effects of foreign trade may be eligible for TRA benefits. Weekly TRA benefits may be available for individuals in Trade approved training or with approved training waivers.

Approved Training Program

Workers whose job prospects would be improved by vocational training may apply through the Approved Training Program to have work search requirements waived while receiving unemployment benefits during training. Vocational training under this program is automatically approved if the applicant is a Certified Dislocated Worker.

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Nebraska

Helping consumers with overextended credit to repay debts, learn good money management skills and plan financially since 1976.

We are not:

- A collection agency
- Money lenders
- Expensive

We are:

- A reliable, effective counseling agency
- A source of practical, accurate financial advice
- A true friend in the financial world
- Able to help you repay your debts efficiently
- A viable workable alternative to bankruptcy

Our services include:

- Free financial advice from certified counselors
- A debt management program
- Information and resources on money management
- Home mortgage and housing retention counseling
- Consumer education on money management
- In person, phone, mail and internet counseling

Branches: Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island, Norfolk, North Platte

CCCSN is a member of the National Foundation for Consumer Credit, the Federal Housing and Urban Development Agency and the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children.

(800) 338-CCCS (2227) www.cccsn.org

Economic Development

The Department of Economic Development provides services for startup and existing Nebraska businesses.

Nebraska Business Toolkit: <http://assist.neded.org>

Questions about these programs call: (800) 426-6505

One-Stop Business Assistance Office

Provides assistance with:

- Legal
- Regulatory
- Licensing
- Permit requirements
- General information for starting a business

Research assistance covering a broad range of topics:

- Public/private resources
- Market research
- Suppliers

Web site contains comprehensive information on:

- Public business finance programs
- Government forms/publications pertaining to business
- Links to a variety of business startup/operating resources

Nebraska Business Development Centers (NBDC)

<http://nbdc.Unomaha.edu>

- General business counseling
- Training programs in business software
- Helpful publications
- Specializing in Small Business Administration loan application assistance

U.S. Small Business Administration

EDGE Entrepreneurial Training

Since 1993, over 1,000 entrepreneurs have gone through EDGE training programs in rural communities across Nebraska. To learn about upcoming programs and locations, call (800) 328-2851.

The U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Business Information Centers (BICs) provide a one-stop location for current and new small business owners to receive assistance and advice. BICs combine the latest computer technology, extensive small business reference library, publications, and current management videotapes to help entrepreneurs start, run, and grow their own businesses.

Some BICs have established resource partners with Small Business Development Centers, and together they offer not only general, but also specialized counseling and training.

In addition, BICs have on-site counseling by the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE). These former owners and managers of businesses lend their expertise and knowledge to assist clients who want to start or expand their businesses.

For more detailed information, contact the **Score Chapter** through one of the following **Chamber of Commerce** offices nearest you: www.score.org

Columbus (402) 564-2769

Norfolk (402) 371-4862

Department of Veterans Affairs

The Nebraska Veterans Aid Fund

Administered by the State of Nebraska, Department of Veterans Affairs the Nebraska Veterans Aid Fund is a program to assist veterans, their spouses and dependents when an unforeseen temporary emergency occurs. Aid may be requested for food, fuel, shelter, clothing, funeral, medical and surgical items. Applicants must meet specific requirements relating to veterans status and must be a legal resident of Nebraska.

Applications must be made through the County Veterans Service Office or Post Service Officer of any recognized veterans organization in the county nearest the applicant's place of residence and must be submitted to the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs.

County Veterans Aid

County Veterans Aid is a program administered by each county in Nebraska to assist needy veterans, their spouses and dependents when an unforeseen temporary emergency occurs. Aid may be requested for food, fuel, shelter, clothing, funeral, medical and surgical items. Applicants must meet specific requirements relating to veterans status and reside in the county.

Applications must be made through the County Veterans Service Office located in the county where the applicant resides.

Department of Veterans Affairs

301 Centennial Mall, South
4th Floor
P.O. Box 95083
Lincoln, NE 68509
(402) 471-2458

Nebraska Veterans Service Office

5631 S. 48th Street
Lincoln, NE 68516
(402) 420-4021 or 4023

Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services provides a wide range of economic assistance and support through local offices in six service areas. Eligibility for economic assistance programs is generally based upon the income and resources available to the household. Assistance is offered through various programs, including:

- Food Stamps
- Aid to Dependent Children
- Unemployed Parents
- Medical Services
- Energy Assistance

Supportive services are also provided and are based upon the need for the service. Supportive services include:

- Child Protective Services
- Child Care
- Children, Youth & Family Services
- Emergency Shelter Care Program

Each case is reviewed individually and with strict confidentiality. Contact the Health and Human Service office nearest you.

Department of Health & Human Services Division of Aging Services

Workers age 55 and over may contact a local Nebraska Area Agency on Aging. The Area Agencies on Aging provide a variety of services to dislocated workers.

P.O. Box 95044, Lincoln, NE 68509

(402) 471-2307 or (800) 942-7830

www.hhs.state.ne.us

United Way of the Midlands

For additional help and information about services, call United Way of the Midlands, “First Call for Help,” at (402) 444-6666. Trained staff and volunteers use a computerized database to immediately put you in touch with health and human-care organizations, as well as religious and civic groups that can meet your needs.

United Way of the Midlands

1805 Harney Street

Omaha, NE 68102

Telephone: (402) 342-8232

Fax: (402) 522-7994

For more information, please visit our web site at: www.uwmidlands.org

Unsure of who to call for information?

Not sure where your nearest Workforce Development office is?

Call America's Workforce Network Toll-Free Help Line

(877)-US2-JOBS • (877)-872-5627

Our customer service representatives can refer you to the Workforce Development offices, programs and services in your area. They will provide the phone number, office location — even give you directions.

Hours from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Monday through Friday

Information is available in over 140 languages.

For TTY call:

(877)-TTY-JOBS or (877)-889-56272

Nebraska Workforce Development Career Centers

The Office of Employment and Training has qualified staff to answer your inquiries regarding employment services. Inquiries may be directed to the following:

Alliance

302 Box Butte Ave
(308) 763-2935

Beatrice

5109 W. Scott Rd.,
SECC Adams Hall
(402) 223-6060

Columbus

3020 18th St., Ste. 1
(402) 564-7160

Fremont

Metro Community College
835 N Broadway
(402) 727-3250

Grand Island

1306 W 3rd St.
(308) 385-6300

Hastings

Landmark Center,
2727 W. 2nd St.
(402) 462-1867

Lexington

1308 N. Adams
(308) 324-2064

Lincoln

1010 "N" St., Box 194
(402) 471-2275

McCook

220 W 1st St.
(308) 345-8470

Nebraska City

905 Third Corso
(402) 873-3384

Norfolk

105 E. Norfolk Ave., Ste. 100
(402) 370-3430

North Platte

306 E. 6th St., Ste. 140
(308) 535-8320

Omaha

5717 F St.
(402) 595-3000

Blue Lion Centre
2421 N 24th St.
(402) 444-4700

Scottsbluff

1930 E 20th Place
(308) 632-1420

Sidney

923 8th Ave.
(308) 254-6937

York

510 Lincoln Ave.
(402) 362-5891

Nebraska JobLink

Nebraska's JobLink is a state of the art, user friendly, self-service tool, provided at no cost, for job seekers and employers. Create and post your resume and search for jobs in the comfort of your home 24/7 or at your local Career Center. Log on to NebraskaWorkforce.com click on "Finding A Job" to access Nebraska's largest online job fair.

With Nebraska JobLink you can:

- Save your searches
- View employer contact information
- Create, edit, store or print your resume
- Send your resume to employers requesting emailed resumes
- Receive email notification when a job is posted in your area of interest
- Help out a friend by using the email a friend feature

Search by:

- Location (zip code and mileage radius)
- Company
- Job category
- Job title
- Type of position, full-time, part-time, temporary

Search Hints

For an initial search enter a zip code in the center of your area of interest and a radius in miles.

Select a category that will include the type of job you are looking for and click on "Find Jobs."

There are additional search options available through the use of the "Advanced Search" feature that will filter the number of job postings by selections, such as full or part-time employment and shift preference.

The Job Search

Looking for work is the hardest work a person may ever do! A serious job search requires as much time looking for work as will be spent on the job. A 40-hour per week job equals a 40-hour per week job search.

Employers' Expectations

Conveying how you can contribute to the employer's business needs when filling out a job application, resume and during an interview is very important. Keep the basic needs of employers in mind:

- Employers need to make money
- Employers need to save money
- Employers need a problem free work environment
- Employers need people who get along well with others

Second, write one or more resumes that advertise your skills to an employer. Now you are ready to begin seeking that new job. Experts agree that today the vast majority (80 percent or more) of job openings are not advertised. Most employment opportunities are hidden. A primary reason is simply that most employers do not need to advertise; they have enough applicants without it.

Networking

Job search networking is a targeted effort to talk to people about your job search. It should not be limited to casual conversations with people you meet. It should be a calculated campaign to contact people for ideas, suggestions and information. Networking is not new, it is simply the sharing of information and resources with others. Everyone carries with them a wealth of information and insight. When we share information, we tap into this wealth of knowledge and open the doors of opportunity. This exchange is often informal and not planned. Networking, as a job search strategy, is more formal and calculated.

The Job Search

Direct Employer Contact

Direct contact is essential for the serious job seeker. But direct contact takes planning and preparation. It is not enough to just walk in and ask, "Are you hiring?" A successful job search is a sales campaign and your challenge is to sell your qualifications.

The first step is to list potential employers. As your job search progresses, you will continually add to this list. The local public library is a priceless resource in this effort. Additional sources for information include your local Nebraska Workforce Development Career Center, schools and community agencies. Persistence and follow-up are the keys to a successful job search.

Private Placement Agencies

Employment agencies come in all shapes, sizes and prices. Determine what they will do for you and how much it will cost. Temporary agencies and contract houses are another source of employment. Increasingly, employers are turning to them for help in managing their human resources. Many people have worked their way into excellent employment by first working as a temporary. If you are receiving any wage subsidy, such as Unemployment Insurance, be sure to check for any adverse consequences temporary employment may have on these benefits. If you choose to use an agency, check them out very carefully and be sure you understand all the conditions of the contract.

Internet Job Search Strategies

The Internet is a global electronic community—a network of networks. Nearly everything found in a real community can be found in cyberspace. There are businesses, social organizations, government agencies, educational institutions and individual residences. Every idea, ideology and interest is represented. For every major job search strategy there is a cyberspace counterpart. The Internet is a virtual gold mine of employment resources that will only get better in the future.

The Internet is a tool, and like all tools it is only as good as the skill of the user. Learning to use the Internet productively takes time and effort; many new users become overwhelmed. One frustration is that the Internet is huge and there is no single manual or help desk; another is that it is constantly changing. What is there today may be gone, moved or changed tomorrow.

It is said that patience is a virtue—on the internet it is a necessity! A dedication to continuous learning is a must. For those who master this tool, the rewards are great. The Internet will open up a whole new world of opportunities.

Employment Services

There are hundreds of businesses specializing in providing employment services. Some are merely advertisements, but many provide services directly online. These services include career counseling, resume writing, placement assistance and job matching. Some sites match job seekers with employers directly online. A great local website is Nebraska Joblink, found at NebraskaWorkforce.com, click on 'Find A Job.' The Internet is a global electronic community — a network of networks.

Internet Job Search Strategies

Cyber Resumes

Once you have mastered the paper resume, you can add plain text and hypertext resumes to your resources. There are numerous opportunities to present your resume to potential employers. You can post your resume on news groups or in resume databases. You can send your resume direct through e-mail. You can even set up a professional web site using your resume information.

Plain Text Resumes: E-mail, news groups and most resume databases require your resume to be in a basic text format. Plain text resumes have the advantage of being read by most computer programs. The major disadvantage is the loss of fancy formatting. The content of the resume should follow the same standards as a paper resume. Many plain text resumes will be managed in a database so special attention should be given to keywords.

Hypertext Resumes: Hypertext resumes take advantage of the features of the World Wide Web. They may include graphics, video, sound, hypertext links and direct e-mail. Some sites that post resumes require them to be formatted in Hypertext Markup Language (HTML).

Many progressive job seekers are creating professional web sites that include their resume information. A good professional web site should follow the publishing standards of the World Wide Web and most of the standards of good resume writing. However, a web site should be more than just an online resume. There are numerous resources on the Internet, in bookstores and in libraries to help in this effort.

Employment Applications

Most employers require an application as the first step to employment. It is used to judge you as a prospective employee and is an opportunity to sell your qualifications. Most employers receive hundreds and even thousands of applications a year. The reality is that employers screen out most applications and read only those that catch their attention.

Visual Impact

Be sure to print neatly, avoid abbreviations, use black ink and respond to all questions. Use N/A (not applicable) if the section does not apply.

Follow Directions

Read the entire application before you begin. Pay close attention to what is being asked. Pay attention to and honor those sections that say “Do Not Write Below This Line” or “Office Use Only.” They may give you insight into the evaluation process.

Be Positive

During your job search you want to present a positive yet honest picture of yourself. Avoid any negative information, especially personal, legal or financial problems. Look for ways to show that you are the right person for the job.

Be Honest

It is important to be truthful on an application. The information you provide will become a permanent part of your employment record when hired. False information can be a basis for dismissal. However, do not volunteer more information than the employer is seeking.

Personal Data Sheet

Take the time to gather and organize all of the information you need including education, employment history, clear and concise descriptions of

Employment Applications

previous job duties, a list of significant skills, and reference information. Keep this data sheet with you whenever you contact an employer.

Salary Requirements

When asked about salary requirements, it is best to respond with “Open” or “Negotiable”. You never know what the future holds, and you may be able to negotiate a higher wage.

Reasons for Leaving

When stating why you left a job, avoid terms like “fired, quit, or personal.” Such terms may screen you out of the job. If you respond with, “I would like to explain at the interview,” you very likely will be called upon to do so. Look for positive statements about why you left such as “Seeking a more challenging position.”

Position Desired

Never leave this question blank or reply “Any” or “Open.” If the job is an advertised job or you are looking for a specific position, enter the job title. If unsure, state the department in which you want to work.

References

References are important, choose them carefully. There are four kinds of references. Employment references are former employers or direct supervisors. Professional references are people who worked with you or know you in your work environment. Academic references are teachers and others who can talk about your school accomplishments. Personal references are people who only know you socially. The employment or professional references are the most valuable because they can discuss your qualifications.

Resume

The resume is an important tool for anyone looking for work. Everyone, from the new entrant into the workforce to the experienced professional, will benefit from a well-written resume. Many employers require a resume be sent as the first method of contact. It can be used to capture an employer's attention, even when no job is advertised. Just as a job search is a sales campaign, your resume should make you stand out from the competition.

Chronological

The emphasis is on a chronological listing of employment and employment-related experiences. The chronological resume is a good format for those with a consistent employment history, no gaps in employment, and whose past employment experiences are related to their current employment goals. It effectively showcases a steady work record with increasingly upward responsibilities. This may not be the best for new graduates, individuals with job gaps, or persons changing careers.

Functional

The functional resume highlights skills, experience and accomplishments without identifying specific dates, names and places. This format is organized by functions or skills, advertising the specific qualifications needed for the occupation. This resume works well for people changing careers. It is also effective for those re-entering the workforce, first-time job seekers and when highlighting experiences that occurred in the distant past. There is no chronological listing of employment. Consequently, many employers do not like this format; it creates suspicion that the person may be trying to hide something.

Resume

Combination

The combination resume brings together the best of both the chronological and functional resumes. It features a functional section that highlights skills, accomplishments and experiences. It also includes a chronological listing of employment, education and employment-related experiences. This is a very effective format for many job seekers. The best chronological resume is enhanced with a section highlighting skills, accomplishments and experience. The best functional resume is strengthened with a chronological listing of employment experiences.

Personal Data

Your name, complete mailing address, and telephone number(s) with area code are all the personal data required. List the information in a "block" format instead of placing the information on one line.

Employment or Career Objective

Include an objective if you have a specific career goal in mind, or you know the title of the job for which you are applying. If you omit the objective on the resume, be sure to communicate it elsewhere, such as in the cover letter.

Summary or Highlights of Qualification

Generally employers will spend less than 10 seconds screening your resume the first time. Their goal is to eliminate as many candidates as possible and concentrate on the best. Therefore, highlighting your qualifications early in the resume is an effective way to improve your chances for consideration.

Resume

Body of Resume

The resume format you choose will determine the sequence of information. For a chronological resume, employment history comes next. In a functional resume, the summary sections would follow. The combination format would include both summary sections and chronological listings.

Education

Unless you are a recent graduate, your education should be placed toward the end of the resume. If you are a recent graduate, then it may be listed earlier in the body. There is no need to list high school education if you have a college degree. If you have a GED, list yourself as a high school graduate.

References

References do not belong on the resume. They should be listed on a separate sheet. Send the references with the resume only when specifically requested by the employer. There is no need to state "References available upon request." It is assumed that you will provide them.

Don't:

- Misspell words
- Cross out writing
- Leave unanswered questions
- Wrinkle or fold the resume
- Turn the application in late
- Mention health, personal, legal or financial problems

Do:

- Be accurate
- Be informative
- Be complete
- Be honest
- Print neatly

Cover Letters

Anytime a resume is sent by mail it must be accompanied by a Cover Letter. This is your opportunity to personalize your resume and target your skills to that specific employer. Cover Letters need to be tailored for each specific situation. There are a variety of Cover Letter formats, some of which are described below.

Invited Letter

Use the “invited” letter whenever an employer has asked for a resume. This is often in response to a want-ad or publicized job listing. This style focuses on matching your qualifications to the advertised requirements of the position.

Referral Letter

Use the “referral” letter to contact employers to whom you have been referred. The effective job seeker will receive referrals to many job opportunities through networking and informational interviews. The referral may be to a specific job opening (advertised or unadvertised) or to an employer who may not be hiring. In a referral letter the individual who provided the referral is mentioned in the letter.

Executive Briefing Letter

This is a variation on the traditional cover letter. This letter gets right to the point and makes life easier for the recruiter. This letter is often the weapon of choice because the initial resume screener might have little understanding of the job or its requirements. Using this format increases the odds of your resume getting through to the right people since there is usually no question whether or not you qualify for the job. If you are not sure what the job requirements are, do not forget the employment advertisements, position descriptions, phone conversations with the employer, and informational interviews.

Cover Letters

Whenever possible, address the cover letter to a specific person by name and title. This requires minimal of research that will ultimately pay off in more interviews. The only time this may not be possible is when responding to a “blind ad” where there is no way to know the name of the company to research. In this case, send the letter to the title of the appropriate hiring manager, (e.g. “Production Manager,” etc.)

Never use the term, “To Whom it May Concern.”

Consider signing the letter in blue ink, it implies the letter is original. The only other color ink to use is black.

The paper and style of your cover letter should compliment your resume.

Thank-You's

“Thank you” is a powerful statement that is heard too seldom. Every thank you is an opportunity to restate your qualifications and to leave a fresh impression in the mind of the reader. Send a thank-you note to employers and employment contacts whenever they have extended themselves in any way on behalf of your job search. At the minimum, a written thank you should be sent after all interviews.

Thank-you notes should be standard tools in your job search.

- When thanking a potential employer, restate your interest in the position and/or company.
- Be brief and to the point.
- If there are multiple people involved, be sure to thank each person. Send one letter to each person or send a single letter to a key person for distribution. When sending more than one thank you, it is very effective to vary each one.
- Always send a written thank you to a person by name.

Interview Tips

Looking for a job is a full-time job. The interview is a critical step toward the goal of employment. It is at the interview that the job is won or lost. An employment interview is simply a meeting between you and a potential employer to discuss your qualifications and see if there is a “fit.” The employer wants to verify what they know about you and talk about your qualifications. It is your goal to identify that need and convince the employer that you are the one for the job. Interviews can be stressful, but when you are well prepared there is no reason to panic.

Preparation

Preparation will help win the interview and will improve interview success. Bring extra copies of your resume, a typed list of references and letter(s) of recommendation. You may also want to bring school transcripts, licenses and certifications.

The more you know about the job, the employer and the industry, the better prepared you will be to target your qualifications.

Think about some standard interview questions and how you might respond. Most questions are designed to find out more about you, your qualifications or to test your reactions in a given situation.

Additional Tips

Maintain good eye contact throughout the interview.

Do not be a clock-watcher.

Dress a step above what you would wear on the job.

The Interview

The purpose of an interview is to become acquainted and to learn about one another. The employer wants to learn how you “fit into the organization”, but it is also an opportunity for you to evaluate the company.

Interview Tips

Employers use a variety of interview formats. There are series of interviews, panel interview, phone interview or the traditional one-on-one interviews. Sometimes staff from the personnel or human resource departments will conduct an initial screening and the hiring authority will conduct the actual interview. Whatever the form or process, the interview is a basic effort to learn your qualifications.

During an interview it is important that you be yourself. It is advised that you get a good night's sleep and plan your travel to arrive in plenty of time.

Interview Questions

The basic question in every interview, whether it is asked or not, is "Why should I hire you?" All other questions center on this one issue. Basic interview questions can take a variety of forms. Generally, questions will ask about you, your qualifications, skills and motivation. If you have prepared for the interview and are confident about your qualifications, none of these questions should be difficult.

Listen carefully to each question asked in the interview. Take your time in responding and make sure your answers are positive. If you are unsure of a question, do not be afraid to ask for clarification.

Show your potential to the company. Support your answers with examples from your experience. Avoid "yes" or "no" responses to questions.

Job Success Skills

Once you have made the big transition through job searching and landed the job, the next goal is job success. The following list of suggestions is based on feedback from a majority of surveyed employers.

Employer Expectations

A positive attitude is one of the most important factors in achieving job success. Do not carry negative feeling into your new workplace. Resolve them elsewhere.

Always be on time. How long will it take to get to work? Allow a few extra minutes for traffic problems and getting children to day care.

Good attendance and promptness are always important. If you are going to be unavoidably late or out sick, ask your supervisor the proper method of informing them.

Know and follow all office rules, policies and procedures. Read the employee manuals.

Listen and learn. Be open to new ways of doing things, even if you were taught differently in school or on a different job. Meet and exceed your employer's expectations.

Communication

When you need to talk with your supervisor, ask when a convenient time would be to meet. Take advantage of your performance reviews. Stay calm, learn from them and ask how you can improve. Show results or job-related classes you have taken. Most supervisors appreciate employees who are concerned about performance and in finding ways to improve. Your job success is also their success.

Be a team player and willing to help. Know the goals of your job and how your job fits into the overall organization. Avoid a "know-it-all" attitude.

Job Success Skills

Try to fit in with the team. Keep your sense of humor. Ask for help when you need it. Follow the proper chain of command. Discuss items with your supervisor first.

Personal

Prior to starting the job, have all of your appointments with doctors, dentists, etc. out of the way. Have your transportation and day care lined up so you do not immediately have to take time off. Have an emergency plan for day care and transportation. Be willing to learn new skills.

Getting Along With Others

Do not express your opinions, biases or prejudices about others while you are at work. Accept criticism as constructive. Do not become defensive or take criticism personally. Thank the person for their input. If you are unsure how to handle the situation, check with your supervisor.

Always be friendly to everyone. Be willing to go the extra mile. This creates goodwill with employers, coworkers and customers.

Find a mentor, someone who knows the company and the job well enough to coach you or show you the ropes.

Realize playing politics or power games could be dangerous and backfire on you.

Treat everyone with courtesy and respect.

Keep your emotions under control. The job is not the place to express or show your opinions or feelings.

Show appreciation. Let your supervisor know you appreciate their training, support, input, feedback, etc.

Strive to be positively recognized. Be friendly and helpful to everyone at all levels.

Dress & Grooming For Job Success

Many of us object to being judged for employment based on how we look. We prefer to be hired because of our skills and abilities, not because of our dress and grooming. But like it or not, appearance is important.

Employers hire people they believe will 'fit' into their organization. Skills, experience and qualifications are important, but so are dress and grooming. Your appearance expresses motivation and professionalism. Dress as though you want the job, as though you already have the job. A good standard is to dress a step above how the best-dressed person dresses for a similar job. When in doubt, err on the conservative side.

Your appearance is a statement of who you are. Your clothing and grooming should create the image that will help you get the job offer.

First Impressions and Dress

Most of us have heard the expression, "a picture is worth a thousand words." Remember this when preparing to meet with a prospective employer. The picture you create will greatly influence your chances of being hired. Most employers form a first impression during the first seven seconds of a meeting. Not much is said in this short time; early judgment is based strictly on appearance. Furthermore, studies reveal that employers consistently ask the question, "Does the individual look right for the job?" Your attitude and confidence level are all affected by the clothes you wear.

Clothing

There are no absolute rules regarding dress. Your selection will vary based on your occupation, location and preference. A business suit for a construction job or overalls for an office job would not be appropriate dress. The goal is to look the part, to have your appearance be consistent

Dress & Grooming For Job Success

with your occupation. Neat, clean, work clothes would be suitable for assembly, production or warehouse positions. Sales and office positions require business clothes. A conservative suit would be the recommended style for professional and managerial positions.

Common sense and good taste are the best guides in selecting clothing for the interview. Avoid faddish styles and loud colors. Jewelry should be conservative and kept to a minimum. Clothing should be pressed and shoes should be shined. Clothes should fit comfortably.

Grooming

Personal grooming is just as important as what you wear. You may select the right clothes, but neglecting personal hygiene can ruin the image you wish to present.

Goals of Appropriate Dress and Grooming

The primary goal is to “feel good” about the way you look and project a positive image. When you feel good about yourself, you naturally convey confidence and a positive attitude. These nonverbal messages are as important in the interview as the verbal skills you use in selling your qualifications. Persistence and follow-up are the keys to a successful job search. If you are serious about employment, plan your follow-up. There is no such thing as a wasted effort and the only dead lead is the one you chose to kill. Situations change and the employer who is not hiring today may be looking for someone with your qualifications in the future.

Skills Identification

Employers want to know what you can do for them — not just what you have done for someone else. Knowledge of your unique skills is needed to successfully complete an application, write a resume, or answer interview questions. Skills identification is the first step toward new employment. Skill is defined as “a great ability or proficiency, expertness that comes from training, practice, etc.”

Everyone has skills, hundreds of skills. Yet most people can only identify a few skills. Employers need to hear what you can do. You are not ready to even begin approaching employers for employment until you can clearly tell them what you can accomplish. The more skills you have identified, the easier it will be to convince a potential employer that you have what it takes to be successful. Skills may be broken into these three categories: Job Content Skills, Self-Management Skills and Transferable Skills.

Job Content Skills

Job content skills are those skills specific to a job or occupation. A salesperson would include customer service, record keeping, order processing, inventory management, billing and product displays. Job content skills are important to employers for obvious reasons. These are the specific skills they are looking for in a candidate to accomplish the duties of the job. Job skills do not always come from employment. Along with the skills you used in previous jobs, you may have developed job skills through education, hobbies, community activities and life experiences.

Self-Management Skills

Sometimes called “personality traits,” these self-management skills are the skills you use each day to get along with others and survive. They are the skills that make you unique. Sincerity, reliability, tactfulness, patience, flexibility, timeliness and tolerance are examples of self-man-

Skills Identification

agement skills. How a person will “fit in” is an important consideration for employers.

Transferable Skills

These are skills that can transfer from one job or occupation to another. They may be either self-management or job content skills and may or may not have been developed through previous employment. For most job seekers it is very unlikely that they will find a job that is identical to their previous employment. For many today, that new job will be totally different from their past experience. Therefore, it is critical for a successful job seeker to carefully evaluate how their skills transfer into other opportunities.

Writing Your Skills

Identifying, listing and describing your skills is not an easy task. However, it is critical to job search success and you should plan to invest the time needed.

List by title any jobs you have held. Start with your most recent employment and work backwards. Write a detailed description of four to five major duties. Think of all the skills needed to accomplish each duty you have listed. Write those skills down on a piece of paper. Remember to look for both job content and self-management skills. Be sure to include tools used, machines operated, knowledge applied, etc.

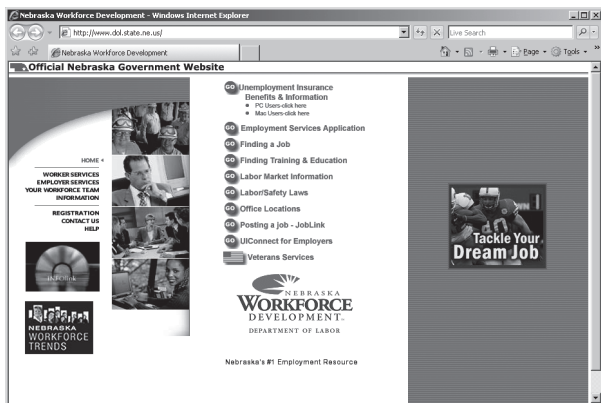
Repeat the above steps for each activity you anticipate, describing to an employer either on an application, resume or in an interview. Use this same process for other work-related activities including hobbies, volunteer work and community experience.

These are the skills you will use in your job search effort.

Nebraska Workforce Development Department of Labor

Our goals at Nebraska Workforce Development are to :

- Prepare a workforce to meet the changing needs of Nebraska employers to compete in the global marketplace.
- Expand employment opportunities for all Nebraskans by providing greater access to skill training, education and career information.
- Assure efficient use of Nebraska's Workforce Development resources by coordinating programs and streamlining services.



NebraskaWorkforce.com
Telephone-402.471.9000

2009

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